

Library Services & Technology Act

FY 1998-99 - APPLICATION FORM

Organization/Institution: **Southern Utah University**
 Project Title: **WWW Access to Special Collection Finding Aids**
 Project Director's Name: **Matthew Nickerson**
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Check Applicable Grant Category

For Public Libraries Only			
Basic Technology	Automation Grant		
Enhanced Integrated System	Planning Grant	Technology Grant	
Enhanced Internet Connectivity	Planning Grant	Technology Grant	
For All Libraries			
Community Electronic Network	Planning Grant	Technology Grant	
Partnerships & Cooperative Projects	Planning Grant	Implementation Grant	
Improved Access to Library Services	Planning Grant	Technology Grant	Customized Service Grant X

Check Funding Category

X Mini-Grant (to \$7,500) No Match required
Regular (\$7,501-\$74,999) Match (25%)
Major (\$75,000 and up) Match (35%)

AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR THE TOTAL PROJECT:

Federal LSTA	\$ 7,399	
Match (if required)	\$	%
Total	\$ 7,399	

WWW Access to Special Collections Finding Aids

I. Summary

Ever since the card catalog gave way to the on-line public access catalog (OPAC) archivists and special collections librarians have longed to provide their patrons with the same level of computer searching power enjoyed by users of library main collections. In 1997 the Library of Congress announced the development of a new system designed to do just that. The Special Collections at SUU's Gerald R. Sherratt Library participated in the beta test of this new program and we are ready to take the next step. Grant funds requested in this proposal will be used to establish a robust, up-to-date server and search engine for searching and sharing our Special Collections materials via the WWW. This service would be the first of its kind in the inter-mountain region.

II. Project description

The automation revolution that has transformed most facets of the modern library has not had the same impact on archives or special collections. Ever since the card catalog gave way to the on-line public access catalog (OPAC) archivists and special collections librarians have longed to provide their patrons with the same level of computer searching power enjoyed by users of the main collections. Unfortunately, the USMARC standard for cataloging books, media and other "library" materials was never designed to classify, order and retrieve the types of materials most often found in archives.

Needs

Patrons wishing to find materials in most archives today are still relegated to searching printed finding aids and usually that means one printed register at a time. Needless to say this is a cumbersome and inefficient method and especially aggravating to patrons (and librarians) who are accustomed to the computer power available for searching and finding book and periodical information elsewhere in the library.

The proliferation of OPACs in libraries has also made it more and more common to be able to search library holdings from distance locations through TELNET or world wide web (WWW) access. Again, users of special collections and archives are at a huge disadvantage since they must travel to where the materials are located in order to search the printed finding aids.

We are especially cognizant of this problem at SUU for two reasons. A significant portion of the patrons using our Special Collections are not SUU students or faculty yet serving them is an important part of our mission as delegated by the state and as outlined in our own Mission Statement: that is the citizens of southern Utah. As a regional university we recognize our responsibility to serve the information needs of all of southern Utah as best we can. Historians and genealogists from around the region are frequent users of our special collections. These patrons often travel hundreds of miles just to see what we have or to check for specific information in a collection they know we own but for which they cannot get any details without coming to the library. It is also important to note that in comparison with users of our main collection and periodicals a higher percentage of Special Collections patrons are elderly for which travel is difficult.

A second factor which has brought this problem to a head is our recent revamping of Special Collections. We have more staff and students than ever before and for the first time a full-time librarian has been assigned to oversee the work in our Special Collections area. We are now turning our sights to organizing, preserving and creating finding aids for many of the smaller collections that have not received our full attention in the past. In planning for finding aids to these collections we wanted to create computer searchable databases as well as printed registers.

How can we provide computer cataloging and searching power for our Special Collections similar to the MARC and OPAC of our main collection? How can we make our Special Collections finding aids available to patrons throughout southern Utah and even around the world? Can we find one system that

will facilitate the creating of both computer readable and print finding aids without having to duplicate effort? In order to answer these questions we began researching library and data base technologies to see what was out there that could meet our needs. This project is the result of that search.

Goals

- To provide computer based finding aids for Special Collections.
- To provide computer based finding aids that allow searching all holdings or searching within individual collections.
- To link Special Collections finding aids to our main library OPAC.
- To give off-campus patrons, especially the elderly and physically challenged, access to Special Collections finding aids via the WWW.
- To give off-campus patrons, especially the elderly and physically challenged, access to select materials from Special Collections via access to digital images through the WWW.

Objectives

- Establish a server with the appropriate hardware and software to provide on-line searching of Special Collections materials.
- Set up and customize the server/software to make Special Collections finding aids searchable through the WWW.
- Gain a basic understanding of SGML and the EAD DTD sufficient to create Special Collections finding aids following the Library of Congress and Society of American Archivists standards.
- Create twenty Special Collections finding aids and have them available for on-line searching by September 1998.

These goals and objectives support long range goals of the both the university and the Gerald R. Sherratt Library by making library and information services more readily available to citizens of southern Utah, the rest of the state and world at large. The WWW is the campus standard for disseminating general university information and providing library services at a distance. This fall the library added a WebPac server to provide OPAC access via the WWW and every month we are adding Web based indexes of periodicals and government documents to our growing list of WWW based services. Implementation of this proposed project will serve as stepping stone to another long range goal: to offer direct access to some important Special Collections holdings by linking digitized documents and photos directly to the finding aid.

As the regional university for all of southern Utah we are particularly anxious to reach out to our rural areas, traditionally under served populations, by making more and more library and university services available through the WWW. Our long standing participation and support of EDNET is evidence of our institutional commitment to using technology to improve and support education in the rural areas of southern Utah. The proposed Web based finding aids for Special Collections would compliment our other efforts.

Program

As described above, our future plans, long and short range goals and current needs all led us to begin researching ways we could provide on-line searching of our Special Collections materials. Our research began just in time to be a part of the next wave in archival finding aids. We were led to a new national standard for archival cataloging being beta tested by the Library of Congress (LC) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) during the summer of 1997. This new standard takes advantage of SGML (Standard Generalized Markup Language.) SGML is an ISO standard (ISO 8879:1986) which supplies a formal notation for the definition of generalized markup languages. As a general language it is designed to be customized to meet specific documentation needs. Customization of the language is by means of a document type definition or DTD, which outlines the internal fields and tags to be used in order to meet specific document needs.

The DTD for using SGML to create archival finding aids was originally conceived and created by the University of California-Berkeley and the Bentley Fellowship Program. Their pioneering work is now

being perfected and maintained by the Library of Congress and the Society of American Archivists. This customizing program (DTD) is known as the Encoding Archival Description or EAD DTD (The Encoding Archival Description Document Type Definition.)

We discovered this ongoing project in time to be beta testers of the EAD DTD. In the summer of 1997 we joined the testing group, subscribed to the EAD listserv and began experimenting with SGML using the EAD DTD and other files available through LC.

After creating our first prototype finding aid using SGML we began investigating technologies that would enable us to search for specific information within the finding aid document and display it through the WWW. We wanted a software package that would 1) be simple enough for us to install and maintain, 2) allow us to design our own web interface, 3) would translate SGML to HTML on the fly for delivery through the Web, 4) would run through any popular web browser without the need for an additional plug-in and 5) would not be prohibitively expensive. Of the three products most often used by other EAD DTD beta testers, I-Site was the only software that met all of our criteria. We gathered the necessary software and hardware and developed a bare bones prototype operation.

Our prototype server is an old 486 desk top computer running Linux to emulate a UNIX operating system. Even with this "low-end" approach we have successfully run a search through the web of a mock finding aid. With the success of our prototype we are now in a position to pursue our Project Goals as stated above. The limited speed and memory of our prototype I-Site server is not suitable for establishing a large permanent Special Collections search site on the Web. Grant funds requested in this proposal will be used to establish a robust, up-to-date server and search engine for searching and sharing our Special Collections materials via the WWW.

To reach our stated goals and objectives we will purchase and configure a new UNIX server with the speed, power and memory needed to support a large data base and web access. The server will be dedicated to the Special Collections finding aids project. Using our experience from the beta test we will design a standard finding aid format and create a core of twenty SGML finding aids to establish this new service at SUU. These finding aids will adhere to the new standards being adopted by both LC and SAA.

Our library automation system, Horizon, is one of the few systems currently able to provide WWW "hot links" directly from the OPAC. This technology makes it possible for us to create MARC records for each collection in Special Collections and then link the Web based finding aid directly to the OPAC bib record. This is very powerful. If, for example, a patron's subject search returned a bib record for a specific collection in our Special Collections, with one click, the patron can go directly to the Web based finding aid and do an item specific search within that collection. This is a brand new level of access that has never existed before.

We are the only library in the area that beta tested the EAD DTD and consequently we are the only Special Collections currently prepared to utilize the new SGML format to create finding aids. With the funding and completion of this project we will be the first library in the inter-mountain region to provide access to archival finding aids via the WWW and the only library in the country that we know of that will link their Special Collections finding aids directly to their OPAC.

Our project, *WWWAccess to Special Collections Finding Aids*, will be supervised by the Project Director, Matthew Nickerson. Prof. Nickerson is on the SUU library faculty and is Special Collections Librarian at the Gerald R. Sherratt Library. Beyond directing the project his specific duties include creating SGML templates, writing finding aids and designing and maintaining the Web pages. He will be assisted by Monte Charlton and Janet Seegmiller.

Mr. Charlton is the Library Network Specialist and will be responsible for setting up the server, loading and customizing the software and maintaining the server after the grant period. Because the initial set-up and the customized programming will be very time consuming he will be working some week-ends and evenings on this project to make sure he can continue to maintain the critical network functions of the library during regular working hours. He is also anxious to hire a student to assist him in the C++ programming necessary to complete this project.

Ms. Seegmiller is the Special Collections Coordinator and will be assisting in creating finding aids and downloading them to the Web server. As we expand the program after the grant period she will be training advanced students to use the SGML templates to increase our productivity in creating on-line finding aids. Resumes of the three members of the project team can be found in Appendix 1.

Timetable

Phase One: We will order the server as soon as funds are allocated and precede as quickly as possible to configure the server and to load all of the necessary I-Site software. We expect the custom programming to take approximately three months. Monte Charlton will only be working part time on this project but he will have a student assistant as described earlier. While the hardware and software are being set-up Matt Nickerson and Janet Seegmiller will be designing SGML templates to standardize the tags to used and to make the creation of new finding aids simpler. Once the templates are finalized they will work together to create the SGML to WordPerfect translator that will produce printed documents from the SGML finding aids. Though this work is considered part of their regular duties they will only be able to devote part of their time to project due to their many other library responsibilities. Matt and Janet will finish the templates and translation program in three months.

Phase Two: With the templates completed and the server functional we will run a complete test of the system. The test will be completed and successful when we: create a finding aid with the templates 2) load the finding aid on the I-Site server 3) search the finding aid using I-Site management software accessed through a web browser and 4) receive correct search results through the browser. The second phase will be completed in three weeks.

Phase Three: The third and final phase will focus on the creation of SGML finding aids for twenty small and/or medium sized collections in our Special Collections. (see Appendix II) These finding aids will be completed and available for searching on the WWW by September 1998.

Evaluation

Internal evaluation of the program's progress will be completed at the end of each phase. SUU librarians, staff and student employees will test the web interface, search engine and display format throughout Phase Two to insure that the search engine is intuitive and as simple as possible and search results are correct, readable and the displayed results are easy to read and understand. When programs such as this are offered over the WWW it is vital to consider all levels of computer expertise and literacy. We will design our project with the beginning library/computer/web user in mind.

Evaluation of the project objectives lies in the establishment of the service as described while sticking to the budget and time line outlined. Though not always directly measurable we will also gather information concerning the project goals by maintaining use statistics of our Special Collections and noting patrons that come to the library with information already gleaned from the Web. We will also set up a counter at our web site to monitor its use and provide an automatic e-mail function at our Web site that encourages users to send us their comments.

Community Support

This project has the complete support of the University's CAO and the Dean of Libraries as indicated by their signatures on the last page. In addition, the Library Systems Administrator, Randy Christensen, also supports this project and has given his assurance that the systems and software established by the grant will be maintained and upgraded in the future after the grant period is over.

Future Funding

In addition to the tech support described above the library will continue to provide monetary support to keep the program established by the grant in operation into the foreseeable future. When necessary, funding to maintain and enlarge this project can come from the John Seymour Endowment, a trust created specifically to support and maintain SUU's Special Collections.

As described in the Goals section of this proposal, the project made possible by the grant, will be a foundation for reaching a long term goal: providing access to digital images of select materials via the WWW.

III. PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

Please provide information where applicable and divide your proposed budget into the following categories. Be specific and be certain of items for expenditure of funds. (Revisions are possible and require submitting formal paperwork and State Library Division approval. If a revision is necessary, remember that your application for LSTA funds was successful because of the needs identified in this application and proposed budget. Revisions require an indication of why the change is desired, why other funds can't be used, and specific revised amounts.)

<u>Category</u>	<u>LSTA Funds</u>	<u>Local Funds</u>	<u>Other*</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
A. Personnel Expenses:				
Salaries and Wages	<u>\$1,880</u>	<u>\$4,000</u>	<u> </u>	<u>\$5,880</u>
Employee Benefits	<u>\$1,120</u>	<u>\$1,600</u>	<u> </u>	<u>\$2,720</u>
SUBTOTAL	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
B. Operating Expenses:				
Travel	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Training	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Materials/Supplies	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Contracted Services	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Other	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
SUBTOTAL	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C. Equipment & Capital Outlay Expenses:				
Computer Hardware	<u>\$4,339</u>	<u>\$2,700</u>	<u> </u>	<u>\$7,039</u>
Computer Software	<u>\$ 60</u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>\$ 60</u>
Other	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
SUBTOTAL	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

D. Other, Specify below

SUBTOTAL

E. Percentage of Matching funds:

SUBTOTAL

TOTALS

\$7,399

\$8,300

\$15,699

IV. Budget Description

A. Personnel Expenses: Local monies will cover the salaries and benefits of the Project Director and his assistant in Special Collections. The work involved in completing this project is part of their regular work load at the library. LSTA grant funds will be used for salary and benefits for Mr. Charlton and wages for the student assistant. The custom programming Mr. Charlton will do as his part of this project does not fall under his regular job description. He will be working on this project on his own time (week ends and evenings) and we are seeking LSTA funds for this overload contract.

B. Operating Expenses: N/A

D. Equipment Expenses: The local equipment contribution is for the purchase of a Pentium 11 Windows OS desktop computer to be used in the creation of the SGML template and the ongoing creation of finding aids (Micron.) LSTA equipment funds will be used to purchase a Sun Solaris Ultra I workstation to house the finding aid database and web server. (See Appendix III for hardware details.)

The I-Site software package is free. The only software purchase is for Sun Solaris 2.6 the UNIX operating system we will be running on the server.

D. Other: N/A

E. Matching: N/A
